Rule of Five

A course is considered the same across Los Rios if it satisfies the following five criteria:

- same course number
- same course title
- same number of units
- same academic level (basic skills, college non-transfer, transfer)
- similar, but not necessarily identical, course descriptions and course content

In practice, the Rule of Five simply means that, if a course is offered by more than one college and has the same identifier, it is treated as the exact same course at each Los Rios college and is presented as being the same course to our articulation partners at four-year institutions. Courses that differ on one of the criteria in the Rule of Five are required to have different course identifiers. Here are some examples illustrating the Rule of Five:

Common Course Identifier. College Composition is a 3-unit, transfer course that is offered by all Los Rios colleges. With the exception of minor differences in course description and course outline, the content of the courses is essentially the same throughout Los Rios. College Composition satisfies the Rule of Five and uses the common course identifier ENGL 300.

Change in Units at One College To meet local needs, CRC would like to offer ENGL 21 (Spelling) as a 3-unit class instead of as a 2-unit class as it is at ARC. Colleagues at ARC, FLC, and SCC concur that it makes sense for CRC to create 3-unit version of the ENGL 21 course; however, the existing 2-unit ENGL 21 continues to work fine for ARC. Under the Rule of Five, the course proposed by CRC is not the same as the ENGL 21 course currently being offered by ARC because it doesn't have the same number of units. Therefore, CRC will use a new course identifier in the same thematic block as the existing course, perhaps ENGL 28.

Change in Title at One College To create a new focus in its French language program, SCC wants to change the title of FREN 100 (Conversational French, Elementary) to Everyday French Language, Life, and Culture, Part 1. Colleagues at ARC, CRC, and FLC concur that it makes sense for SCC to create a version of the FREN 100 course with the new title; however, the existing title meets the needs of ARC, CRC, and FLC and they don't plan to change their course titles. Under the Rule of Five, SCC is proposing a new French course entitled Everyday French Language, Life, and Culture, Part 1. As a new course, it will be assigned a new course identifier in the same thematic block as the existing course, perhaps FREN 105.

Substantial Change to Catalog Description or Course Content at One College In response to student needs, FLC would like to split the 5-unit Math 120 (Intermediate Algebra) into a two-semester sequence rather than the one-semester format offered at the other Los Rios colleges. Colleagues at ARC, CRC, and SCC agree that the two-semester format would work best at FLC, but they prefer their one-semester version. Under the Rule of Five, FLC is proposing two new courses with different identifiers (MATH 123, MATH 124), different titles (Intermediate Algebra, Part 1 and Intermediate Algebra, Part 2), and new units (3 units, 3 units, respectively).